

G.O.P. GROUP SAYS 'THIN' MISSILE NET COULD SPLIT NATO

**Warns That Move to Guard
Only U.S. Might Result in
'Defensive Neutrality'**

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A group of House Republicans warned today that the Administration's decision to deploy a "thin" missile defense system could "fatally rupture" the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

A purely national defensive system, the Republicans said, may drive the European allies into "positions of defensive neutrality."

To prevent "this calamity," they urged the Administration to explore with the NATO allies the possibility of building a "community defensive system to defend both Western Europe and the United States.

The criticism of the limited anti-ballistic missile defense system, now designated Sentinel, but formerly known as Nike, was contained in a statement issued by Paul Findley of Illinois, chairman of the 15-member House Republican Committee on the Western Alliances.

Study by Congress

The Administration decision to deploy the system will come under its first detailed examination by Congress tomorrow when the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy opens hearings.

To an extent, the committee prompted the Administration move to use a "thin" defense with its warnings of the rapid progress China was making in developing nuclear warheads and the missiles to deliver them.

But the question now being raised by the committee is whether the United States should not go further and deploy a much more costly defense system against the Soviet Union.

Ostensibly, Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington, chairman of the military applications subcommittee of the point committee, is neutral on whether the United States should build an anti-Soviet system that could as much as \$40-billion.

However, the prevailing view within the committee seems to be that the anti-Chinese system, costing some \$15-

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billion, should be regarded as only a "building block" toward a more extensive system.

In announcing the decision to deploy an antimissile system last September, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara emphasized that it was designed to guard against the modest missile force China was expected to have by the mid-nineteen-seventies.

Cold War Move

At the same time, he acknowledged that even the limited system would have some value in protecting American missile sites against a Soviet attack.

This point particularly troubled the Republican committee, which said it was viewed by the

European allies as not just an anti-Chinese move but as another round in "cold war competition."

Furthermore, the committee said, the Administration committed a "gaffe" by not consulting the European allies on the system.

It declared:

"Our willingness to share nuclear responsibility with our allies in the past has led to the present rift in NATO. We should not seal NATO's demise by rushing into the development of an ABM [antiballistic missile] system alone."

In contrast, members of the joint committee are bothered that the Soviet Union may be intent on challenging American superiority in nuclear weapons. In the last year there was an increase of 50 per cent in the deployment of Soviet intercontinental missiles, and Senator Jackson observed in an interview that "there appears to be an abatement in Soviet efforts to push toward nuclear superiority."

Committee concern has been

heightened by the disclosure that the Soviet Union is developing a system capable of delivering a warhead from orbit.

Senator Jackson has said the committee will study this, too.

While not acknowledging that the Soviet Union is bent on nuclear superiority, the Administration argues that the United States should counter any increase in Soviet power by relying on offensive missiles.

This presumes that, in a large-scale attack, offensive missiles will penetrate any defensive system.

The Administration case will be presented to the committee by Dr. John S. Foster, director of defense research and engineering in the Pentagon. He will be accompanied at the opening session by Paul H. Nitze, deputy secretary of defense.